

Is the American Ugly?

When evaluating the characteristics of any culture, it must be pointed out that even an anthropologist is bound by his/her own culture. Hsu, an anthropologist who spent half his life in China found that Americans are obsessed with privacy. However, we don't seem very private to the French with our unfenced yards, open office doors and the windows of our homes facing the street . It all depends, therefore, on who's looking.

Write "True" next to the items you think are general traits of American culture.

- _____ 1. The past plays a limited role in American culture. It is the foreseeable future that counts.
- _____ 2. There is an obsession and segmentation of time.
- _____ 3. Americans believe that sitting around "doing nothing" is productive.
- _____ 4. Group solidarity is more important than self-interest or self-expression.
- _____ 5. Privacy of the individual is not important.
- _____ 6. Bigger and more is better.
- _____ 7. Americans do not tolerate mistakes.
- _____ 8. A person is defined by their work.
- _____ 9. Religion is not important.
- _____ 10. Americans are patient toward actions perceived as "slow".
- _____ 11. America is a "non-contact" culture.
- _____ 12. Promptness is not highly valued.
- _____ 13. Americans value speaking to the point.

Adapted from F. Hsu's The Study of Literate Civilizations by Judie Haynes, 2002